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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 LAGOS 000013

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: JONATHAN'S MEDIA ADVISOR: CANDIDATE TAKING NOTHING  
FOR GRANTED

REF: LAGOS 3

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary: Francis Sheen, media manager for Bayelsa State Governor Goodluck Jonathan's 2007 People's Democratic Party (PDP) vice presidential campaign (strictly protect), told Pol/Econ Chief and Poloff on December 28 that the PDP must still court the military's support for the Yar'Adua-Jonathan ticket. Jonathan is taking nothing for granted, aware that President Obasanjo could shuffle the ticket before the February deadline for changes of candidates by political parties. If Obasanjo makes a shift, Jonathan could replace the current PDP nominee and run again for Governor of Bayelsa State. End Summary.

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PDP Ticket Still Does Not Have Military Approval  
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12. (C) On December 28, Francis Sheen, media manager for Bayelsa State Governor Goodluck Jonathan's 2007 vice presidential campaign and assistant to the Governor's Special Advisor on Economic Development and Finance (strictly protect), told Pol/Econ Chief and Poloff that though the People's Democratic Party (PDP) machinery is "big and strong," that is not enough to win. The military establishment, which includes not only those currently serving in the military but also National Assembly members, many of whom have military backgrounds, are not comfortable with the PDP's choice of "these two strange fellows" neither of whom have military backgrounds, Sheen said. To have any chance of winning the presidency, PDP presidential aspirant Katsina Governor Yar'Adua and running mate Jonathan will need to give the military establishment assurances they will be "taken care of" and know where "the bread is going to be buttered," Sheen said.

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Buhari and Nnamani Would Make Formidable ANPP Ticket  
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13. (C) If former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari, the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) presidential candidate, chooses

Senate President Ken Nnamani from Enugu State to be his running mate, the ANPP may have a stronger ticket than the PDP, Sheen fretted. As a former military leader, Buhari's candidacy would seemingly address the military's concerns. Buhari is already so popular that he could beat Yar'Adua in Katsina, his home state, Sheen said. Although Buhari has already named ANPP National Chairman Edwin Ume-Ezeoke as his running mate, a stronger choice would be Senate President Ken Nnamani. (Note: Ume-Ezeoke was former Speaker of the House under Shagari and most recently ANPP National Chairman. However, many observers consider Ume-Ezeoke as a placeholder until Buhari chooses his actual running mate before the February 20th deadline. End note.) With Nnamani as a running mate, Buhari would also take the south-east, Sheen believes. Nnamani would also win the ANPP Igbo support throughout Nigeria, particularly in Lagos, Ibadan, Kano and Kaduna where there are large, strong Igbo populations, Sheen contended. Another factor in the ANPP's favor would be that the public does not consider either Buhari or Nnamani to be under the control of President Obasanjo. By contrast, Yar'Adua and Jonathan will have to work hard and use Jonathan's "humble background" to convince the public that he and his running mate are not part of the current establishment, Sheen said.

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But Atiku, IBB Are Out of the Race  
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¶4. (C) Atiku would split the vote with Buhari in the north and the southwest because of his backing by Lagos Governor Tinubu, among others, Sheen said, but the military will never let both Atiku and Buhari run at the same time. Atiku will likely throw in the towel for Buhari because Buhari has the military's support, which Atiku can never attain, according to Sheen. Ibrahim Babangida is out of the race because, when

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summoned to attend a "truth and reconciliation" panel, he refused to participate; as a result, the PDP has him where they want him, Sheen said.

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Jonathan Keeping a Tight Grip on Bayelsa  
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¶5. (C) Jonathan is not taking the vice-presidential candidacy for granted, Sheen said; President Obasanjo could "turn on" Yar'Adua and/or Jonathan at any time. The party has until February 14 to change candidates for Governor and the State Assemblies, and until February 20 to change candidates for the Presidential and National Assembly races. Governor Jonathan finds himself in a precarious situation--currently divorced from the gubernatorial ticket but not fully and irrevocably wedded to the presidential slate, Sheen explained. If the PDP is able to secure the military's backing and if Obasanjo does not reshuffle the ticket, Jonathan will most likely go to Abuja. If, however, Obasanjo executes a February surprise, Jonathan will remain in Bayelsa.

¶6. (C) Jonathan has a contingency plan which will enable him to reclaim the governorship. The key to this plan is retired banker and 2003 ANPP gubernatorial candidate Chief Francis Doukpola, who came in third during the PDP's Bayelsa gubernatorial primaries. Doukpola, Sheen explained, is an ideal door-stop candidate. The plan is for Doukpola to run for governor under the PDP with Dr. Godknows Igali, Secretary to the State Government (SSG), as the running mate. Should Jonathan for some reason not make the final PDP Presidential ticket, Doukpola can easily be "thrown aside," to be replaced either by Jonathan or someone else. Dr. Igali, Sheen intimated, will be instrumental in seeing this plan through. As for Timi Alaibe, the controversial Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Finance Director and Bayelsa State gubernatorial aspirant, President Obasanjo called him and

told him to "let Jonathan run Bayelsa State", Sheen said.

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Would Jonathan Expand Bayelsa Partnership?  
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17. (C) The Bayelsa State government has handled the militants in such a way as to allow Governor Jonathan and others to move to higher office, Sheen believes. Militant activity will settle down in January, he optimistically predicted, explaining that "everything is under our control."

There are currently several projects intended to create jobs opportunities that will affect the Niger Delta situation, Sheen said.

-- The Bayelsa government has a plan by which to offer militants employment in a regional bus system. The Bayelsa government has entered into negotiations with the Chinese to purchase the vehicles, and plans to engage the local communities to act as private operators.

-- Bayelsa also has a project to create jobs by providing low income housing. Through a contract with Princeton Global Housing, which helped to plan the project, and the Oppenheimer Foundation, which has agreed to provide funding for mortgages, Bayelsa State will construct 2,000 low-income housing units for civil servants. The cost to the civil servant of purchasing a housing unit will be approximately 30 percent of his/her annual wage; the government will automatically withhold a portion of the worker's salary to pay for the housing. Bayelsa has already overcome a major obstacle to the project by working to amend Nigeria's Land Use Law, which does not allow foreclosures. With the Minister of Housing, legislation amending the Land Use Law was submitted to the National Assembly and will be read a third time during the week of January 1. To generate employment opportunities through the housing project, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank, will provide USD 30 million for use in training women to manufacture roof and floor tiles. Sheen has been working with an NGO from India which will provide kilns and a model for the project. Sheen hopes to see an expansion of the project to build 1,000 housing units in each

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local government area.

-- USAID is supporting direct cassava processing which, through cluster farms, will be used at methanol plants. The BPI will contribute 30 percent of this project's budget. Shell and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) will soon begin to aid Bayelsa in a catfish farming project under the BPI.

-- Bayelsa State has arranged for 200 scholarships through which Bayelsa graduates may attend traditionally black colleges in the United States, Sheen said. The Carmen Group has been working to arrange this program, Sheen said.

18. (C) If Jonathan is elected Vice President, Sheen thinks it will be at least a year or two until he can spread development programs through the south. The Bayelsa Partnership Initiative (BPI) is just beginning to get off the ground in Bayelsa and has not yet yielded any fruits; until it does, Sheen was doubtful Jonathan would try to replicate it elsewhere.

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Militant Negotiations: We Deal With Their Mothers  
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19. (C) In dealing with hostage crises, the Bayelsa State Government does not hand over cash to the militants, but does give "gifts", Sheen said. In the current hostage situation, in which three Italians and a Lebanese citizen are being held, the Bayelsa State Government went to the militants'

mothers in the communities to intercede for the hostages' release. (Note: Sheen was under the incorrect assumption that the State Government's negotiations had resulted in the release of the hostages the night of December 27. As of January 4, the hostages had not been released. End note.)

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EFCC and Courts Doing a Good Job  
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¶10. (C) The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has become a Nigerian fixture, Sheen asserted. The EFCC has "done a good job," except for its failure to obtain the release of funds stashed in Swiss bank accounts during previous regimes, Sheen commented.

¶11. (C) Supreme Court Chief Justice Salihu Modibbo Alfa Belgore is the best thing to have happened to Nigeria's court system, Sheen said. Sheen believes the judiciary has done a fine job upholding the rule of law, as evidenced by its decision to void criminal charges brought against Vice President Atiku by the Federal Government. Sheen also commented that he and members of the Bayelsa State Government were surprised that Oyo State did not "go up in flames" when Governor Ladoja was impeached.

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COMMENT  
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¶12. (C) The voluble Sheen offered some valuable insights into the machinations that continue to swirl around the nomination process. That Sheen sees possibility in Obasanjo jettisoning Yar'Adua and Jonathan at the last moment speaks volumes about the power Obasanjo still wields over the party process, the lack of restraint in the PDP as well as other parties and the low level of trust President Obasanjo now commands. While it is unlikely that Obasanjo will tinker with the ticket, Sheen's reservations are representative of a school of thought that has sufficient enough members that it cannot be ignored. If he is correct, the move to oust Jonathan would have to begin soon. Sheen appears to be playing a key role in Bayelsa Partnership Initiative programs that are, by his own admission, in their early stages. Whether Bayelsa will be able to move forward with these programs in the upcoming months, especially as the electoral campaign asserts its gravitational pull, is unclear. Even if the projects get off the ground, it is too soon to tell whether they will make the difference to the people of the

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Niger Delta that Sheen so confidently predicts. End Comment.  
BROWNE